

Chart # - French Wars of Religion

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The slaughter of French Huguenots quickly spread to the provinces and about 20,000 Huguenots were ultimately killed by Roman Catholic mobs. The prime responsibility for the massacre was borne by Caterina de Medici, who opposed the influence of the Protestant leader, Admiral Gaspard de Coligny-Châtillon over her weak son, King Charles IX.

Admiral Coligny was attacked in his house during the St-Bartholomew Day Massacre on Thursday, 24 August 1572, by a group led by Francis de Lorraine, Duke of Guise. After several of his entourage had been killed, a servant of the new Duke of Guise, Charles Danowitz or Jean Charles D'Janowitz (Karel z Janovic), who was generally known as Besme or Bême, plunged a sword through Coligny's breast and threw his body out of a window to his master's feet. Coligny finally died when another of Guise's associates chopped off his head.

The admiral is quoted as saying "My friends, there is nothing I can do to rescue you. I voluntarily receive my death in the hands of God. Save yourselves." At that time he had several people at his service including Nicolas Mius. Everyone left except for Nicolas who stayed at the Admiral's side and was murdered with him.

Charles de Téligny became one of the first victims in the massacre of St Bartholomew's Day. He was murdered in the halls of the Louvre after refusing to recant his Protestant beliefs. His remains were taken to the Castle of Téligny in 1617, but eight years later were thrown into the river by the Bishop of Castres.

Charlotte allegedly died from exhaustion while trying to nurse her husband, Protestant William, Prince of Orange, , after an assassination attempt in 1582. Following her death, William married on 24 April 1583, his fourth and last wife, Louise de Coligny, by whom he had a son Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange. Declared an outlaw by the Spanish king in 1580, William I the Taciturn was assassinated by Balthasar Gérard, who shot him twice with a pistol... and was afterwards tried, convicted, and gruesomely executed.

